

Oral Questions

If the hon. member wants to ask me another question, he can ask the other question.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, on October 9, 1980, the then Leader of the Opposition, the right hon. member for Yellowhead said about advertising: "I think that attempts to spend public money to manipulate public opinion on public questions that have not been decided is an improper practice that offends the right of the House of Commons".

I want to ask the minister who has just answered how he can justify spending \$25 million that Canadians do not have to propagate the policy of a failing government. How can that be right?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is suggesting that we should not be talking about the challenges of international competitiveness.

He is suggesting that these are not issues that Canadians want to learn more about and that Canadians do want to participate in in a broad way as we are proposing through the community consultations.

I would tell my hon. friend first of all that Canadians want to participate in them. They have said that international competitiveness is the most important issue that they are facing in a poll that was put out just on Monday by the *Toronto Star* and the CBC.

We are responding to that great concern by watching this prosperity initiative so we can strengthen the economy of this country in the coming years.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the minister that the ultimate democratic consultation is called an election.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister, the ultimate guardian of the public purse. Once more, Tory cronies are going to dip into it and receive advertising contracts. Will the Prime Minister make a commitment today and promise all Canadians that none of this money will be spent before there is a public tender for advertising contracts? Is he prepared to give us this assurance today?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we have indicated our proposal to launch the broadest possible consultation process.

A large amount of the spending that is in that money that was referred to by his colleague is money that is being spent within the government on public servants who are being reallocated from other government departments.

To suggest that this is a total amount of new money first of all is wrong. It is reallocated money. It is reallocated people directed to focus on the most important economic issue that we are facing today, improving our competitive position internationally.

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NUCLEAR VESSELS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Despite the distortions and protests of the Liberals earlier in Question Period, it was in fact they who opened our territorial waters and ports to nuclear vessels a quarter of a century ago.

An hon. member: Shameful.

Mr. Fulton: What has happened today to the Dixon Entrance, the richest fishing grounds in Canada, is however much more serious. It is on those points that I would like the Secretary of State to address her mind. The technique that has been used to exempt U.S. nuclear submarines from transiting Dixon Entrance was found to be illegal by the Federal Court in May of this year.

My question to the minister is this: Why has she and the cabinet chosen to use a technique that has already been found illegal and denies the public in British Columbia the right to assess the real and measurable risks of submarines involved in testing activities in our waters and to the north of our waters?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me remind the hon. member of two things. First of all, this is an acoustical testing facility. It is not a nuclear testing facility.

Second, let me remind the hon. member that the history of U.S. nuclear submarines is an excellent one in terms of safety, that we have discussed with them and we have consent from them concerning their use of our sovereign waters and that we have received from them